# ΔiaLing

- **26 april 2018** om 15u in de Grote Vergaderzaal (3de verdieping, Blandijn):

## Number-neutrality and DP structure in Buriat
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In this talk, we will describe a puzzle concerning number interpretation of nominals in Buriat (Mongolic), based on fieldwork data, and offer a solution to this puzzle. Buriat has a two-way number opposition in morphology (unmarked vs. plural), but semantically, both forms appear to be number neutral, as revealed by standard tests based on interpretation in non-upward-entailing contexts. Even though the number neutrality of unmarked nominals is heavily restricted (to inanimate nouns), it does not boil down to incorporation or pseudo-incorporation. This means that Buriat has two synonymous number forms — a typologically rare situation. At the same time, one of these forms, namely, the plural, normally carries non-singularity inferences in upward-entailing contexts, while the other form doesn't. To account for these facts, we argue that although on the overt morphological level Buriat nouns have a two-way number distinction, in fact, it's a three-way distinction: we propose that unmarked nominals can be either singular (projecting a NumP) or numberless (lacking a NumP). In case they are singular, they are semantically strictly atomic, but when they are numberless, they are truly number neutral, just like the plural forms. The non-singularity inferences of plurals and the consistent number neutrality of numberless nouns are accounted for in a Katzirian system with structurally defined alternatives.